

Kawasaki Good Times News

LOOKS LIKE A WINNER . . .

A LOT OF (QUITE POSSIBLY UNCONSCIOUS) BORROWING HAS GIVEN US A REALLY SMART LOOKING MID-RANGER.

The ER-6n is the first of Kawasaki's new bike family, which is already becoming quite an extended one. It is an interesting and attractive combination of things we've seen before and things we've never even thought of.

I'd love to have been a fly on the wall when Kawasaki's engineers at the Akashi design centre decided on the shape of the ER-6n. It has a muffler like a Buell (only more so), "shoulder pads" like a Katana (only more so) or a Benelli, a headlamp fairing like a KTM Duke (only more, but you get the picture) plus many other design cues from bikes over the past few decades. Like one of those tribute-heavy Hollywood films, it should really be a terrible mishash but it's not. There was some very high quality design input for this bike.



Each part has been carefully considered. Even the fuel cap echoes the instrument pod's shape. It doesn't all work; the rear blinkers just look strange, not stylish, but they're the exception. Just about everything else looks great, even if it doesn't necessarily make sense. Take those shoulder pads - what do they do apart from continuing the line of the integrated blinkers and establishing a form for the woven-looking metal spar that holds the footpegs?

Well, nothing. What else should they do?

And why is the frame painted bright red to match the triple clamps on the silver bike I had?

Well, why not? Doesn't it look great?

The bike under all that flash design is fine. The compact vertical twin is enthusiastic if not especially outstanding. It has plenty of midrange and will allow even the laziest rider to keep up with equivalent machinery without stirring the gearbox too much. The engine seems to have a decent-sized flywheel, for once. There are pulses rather than vibration through the handlebars, and pulses from the exhaust as well.

The bike is quite small, too, which is good news for short people everywhere. If you're tall, there's a higher seat. Both rider and pillion are comfortable and the small "fairing" offers a modicum of protection from the wind. Kawasaki has clearly learned how to get maximum protection from a minimum of plastic - see Z750 and Z1000.

I've just realised I haven't yet mentioned the very stylish angled, offset shock absorber, the clear but unusual instruments and the wave brake discs.

The ER-6n is fun to buy at that price, fun to look at, fun to ride and even fun to push a little harder on the open road than its pretty face might suggest (the handling is good, partly because the bike is so light). Braking and cornering are both good enough to add to the fun as well.

The ER-6 family is one family that definitely will be welcome in my neighbourhood.

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Kawasaki
Let the good times roll.